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We claim:

A method for forwarding packets to a network, comprising the steps of:

- attempting to forward a packet stored in memory to the network;
- establishing a time limit within which to forward the packet stored in the memory
- 4 to the network;
- 5 monitoring an elapsed period of time while attempting to forward the packet
- 6 stored in the memory to the network; and
  - determining whether to carcel attempts to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network when the elapsed period of time exceeds the time limit.
  - 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of canceling attempts to forward the packet stored in the memory when that packet is not currently being transmitted over the network.
  - 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of allowing transmission of the packet stored in the memory to complete when that packet is currently being transmitted over the network
  - 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of interrupting transmission of the packet stored in the memory when that packet is currently being transmitted over the network.



1	5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of resetting a timer to
2	allow additional attempts to forward the packet stored in the memory when that packet is
3	not currently being transmitted over the network.
1	The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of replacing the packet
2	stored in the memory with a new packet having the same data as the replaced packet
3	when it is determined to cancel the forwarding of the stored packet.
1	7. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of replacing the packet
2	stored in memory with a new packet having different data than the replaced packet when
3	it is determined to cancel the forwarding of the stored packet.
1	The method of claim 1/2 wherein the packet stored in memory includes
2	time-sensitive data and protocol-related data, and the new packet has the same time-
3	sensitive data and different protocol-related data as the replaced packet.
1	The method of claim & further comprising the steps of:
2	resetting a back-off level; and
3	attempting to forward the new packet to the network.
1	The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:
2	initiating attempts to transmit the new packet to the network; and
3	resetting the elapsed period of time.

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- The method of claim 8 wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and the step of replacing the packet stored in memory with a new packet can occur a predetermined maximum number of times.
- The method of claim † wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and protocol-related data, and the new packet has different time-sensitive data and the same protocol-related data as the replaced packet.
  - 13. The method of Claim 1 wherein the steps of monitoring, establishing the time limit, and determining whether to cancel forwarding the packet stored in memory occur only when the packet stored in the memory includes time-sensitive data.

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